

Kettering Science Academy

Deeble Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7AA

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Poor teaching over time has led to successive cohorts of pupils underachieving.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of some aspects of the school’s work rigorously. This means weaknesses are not always addressed quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Leaders have not taken sufficient action to bring about the necessary improvements. The strategy for further improvements is not robust.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and achievement.
- Teachers do not routinely consider pupils’ abilities when planning activities. The least able are not sufficiently supported and the most able are not fully challenged.
- Teachers do not always involve all pupils in learning. They do not plan activities to interest and encourage all pupils. Discussions do not involve all pupils effectively.
- Pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around school requires further improvement. There is too much low-level disruption and pupils are not always respectful.
- Although improving, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend school regularly enough.
- The quality of education in the sixth form is inconsistent. Leaders have been slow to evaluate the impact of their work to improve this aspect of the school.
- Some parents do not feel fully informed to be able to effectively support their children’s progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a realistic view of the school’s weaknesses and are taking effective action to bring about improvements to many aspects of the school.
- Pupils’ personal development and well-being are promoted through strong pastoral support.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to challenge underperforming staff. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving.
- Behaviour has improved considerably. Overall attendance has improved.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
 - plan activities that interest and engage pupils so that they are supported to become more effective learners
 - use information about what pupils are able to do to plan activities that support the least able and challenge the most able
 - use questioning to facilitate discussion and exploration and to involve all pupils to develop their reasoning skills and to deepen their understanding.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - evaluate the impact of their work more robustly and amend strategies accordingly, including in the sixth form
 - raise expectations of teachers' classroom practice and ensure that all staff meet these expectations
 - develop a cohesive strategy for the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school
 - facilitate the sharing of good practice among all staff
 - further develop strategies to work with parents, ensuring that they are fully informed and thus able to support their children.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - further improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that teachers insist on high standards of behaviour to reduce low-level disruption in classrooms and to support pupils to develop respectful attitudes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have a realistic view of the school's weaknesses and are taking effective action to bring about improvements. From a considerably low starting point, they have ensured that pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have improved. However, the extent to which improvements have been necessary has meant that there is not yet a significant impact on pupils' outcomes.
- In 2016, the secondary and primary phases of the school separated. This has meant that governors and leaders are now focused entirely on driving improvements for pupils in key stages 3, 4 and 5. The rate of improvement has increased as a result.
- In previous years, a significant proportion of pupils have attended off-site alternative provision. The principal took the decision to dramatically reduce the use of alternative provision and reintegrate pupils into the school. This had a detrimental impact on whole-school behaviour. Leaders have systematically ensured that this has been tackled and behaviour has improved considerably.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been poor in the past. The principal has taken appropriate action to challenge underperforming staff, resulting in significant numbers of staff leaving the school.
- Instability in staffing, resulting in a high proportion of temporary staff in recent years, has had a negative impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. Leaders, supported by the trust, have taken appropriate action to recruit specialist, permanent staff. They have also ensured a higher calibre of staff through in-house training and development. The school will be fully staffed in September 2017.
- The leadership of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not strategic enough to bring about the rapid improvements that are necessary. There is an ad-hoc approach. For example, new initiatives such as the assessment and feedback policy and the introduction of a whole-school approach to starting lessons, are not firmly rooted in a cohesive, all-encompassing approach. Leaders have not taken swift enough action to improve this fundamental aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders have not ensured that staff have a clear understanding of how to improve their practice. Although they have introduced minor, albeit helpful, strategies such as the weekly show-and-tell activity, they have not ensured that best practice is shared throughout the school effectively.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is allocated appropriately and has contributed to improvements in outcomes for these pupils. However, leaders do not evaluate its impact robustly enough to ensure that it is used as effectively as it might be.
- The use of the Year 7 catch-up funding is evaluated thoroughly. This means that leaders are able to amend the strategy to meet individual pupil's needs and ensure continued improvements in pupils' reading and numeracy skills.

- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school. Senior leaders are well supported by a team of 'student support' officers to promote good behaviour and support pupils in meeting the raised expectations of behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders recognise that, in the past, the curriculum has not met pupils' needs. They have implemented a new curriculum to support pupils' progress, including a modified curriculum for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities which provide enriching experiences. For example, the school recently presented its first musical production. Pupils and staff are, rightly, proud of such achievements.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils are fundraising to participate in visits to Kenya and Peru.
- Fundamental British values are explored through the curriculum and pupils have a sound understanding of many aspects of life in modern Britain. However, further work is needed to ensure that pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of Britain is developed.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent. Leaders have a good knowledge of pupils' needs and individuals are well supported, but there is a lack of strategic planning and greater priority needs to be given to these pupils throughout the school.
- Staff recognise the advances that have been made and are supportive of leaders' drive for improvements.
- Leaders have improved communication with parents. The vast majority of parents who made their views known to inspectors recognise and appreciate the improvements that have been made. Leaders are aware of the need to further develop relationships with parents to help them support their children's progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the trust and the local governing body. Both are committed to improving standards in the school and are passionate about supporting pupils' achievements and personal development.
- Members of the local governing body and the trust are extremely knowledgeable and have the skills to hold leaders to account. They are appropriately supportive and challenging.
- Those responsible for governance have ensured that the principal's performance management targets are sufficiently robust.
- The trust has provided effective support, particularly for leadership. Appropriate plans are in place to continue to support leaders to drive improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have established a culture of safeguarding where all staff recognise and understand their responsibility in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being.

- Leaders have ensured that staff receive appropriate training. As a result, staff have an up-to-date understanding of current safeguarding issues.
- Leaders have introduced a new electronic system of recording safeguarding concerns. Staff appreciate the ease with which this enables them to make referrals.
- Leaders take appropriate action if they have concerns over a pupil's safety or well-being and follow up concerns in a timely manner. Leaders engage well with external support agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across and within subjects and key stages.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and progress has been slow over time.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about what pupils are able to do in planning activities. In many classes, all pupils work on the same activities, regardless of their ability. This means that the least able pupils are not effectively supported and the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers do not routinely plan activities which interest and motivate pupils. This leads to pupils going off-task and engaging in low-level disruption.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's feedback policy, particularly in relation to the least able pupils. This means that they are not challenged when their work does not match their abilities, nor are they encouraged to develop an understanding of how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not ensure that all pupils participate in discussions. Questions are not targeted at pupils' abilities and many pupils fail to contribute. This means that pupils are not effectively supported to develop their reasoning skills and consolidate their learning. This also means that too many pupils are passive and not actively engaged in their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Positive relationships enable pupils to respond well to encouragement and direction. Pupils are supported to develop their skills for independent learning.
- There are pockets of stronger practice where teachers use their understanding of pupils' abilities to plan engaging activities that match pupils' needs. In these lessons, pupils participate well, remain focused and make good progress.
- Much work has been undertaken to encourage pupils to read more widely, for example, through the 'book dating' initiative promoted by library staff and through reading sessions during English lessons. Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read and observed pupils reading a range of appropriately challenging texts with concentration and enjoyment.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's feedback policy, particularly in relation to the least able pupils. The policy is implemented more effectively in English at key

stage 4.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils are not supported to develop positive learning behaviours in many areas because teachers do not communicate high enough expectations of behaviour and effort.
- Pupils do not consistently show a pride in achievement or a commitment to learning. Teachers do not challenge poorly presented or incomplete work, particularly that of boys and the least able pupils. This limits pupils' progress.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They feel safe at school and know who they should approach if they have concerns.
- Leaders hold the interests of pupils at the heart of all they do. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils' well-being is promoted throughout all aspects of school life.
- Pastoral support is a strength of the school. Pupils receive impartial guidance and are well informed about the choices available to them. Leaders are creative in supporting pupils' varied behavioural and pastoral needs.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision off the school site are well supported to develop the skills and behaviour necessary for success in their current studies and next steps.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Teachers do not consistently challenge low-level disruption in classrooms or poor behaviour around school. Pupils do not always show respect to staff.
- Leaders, supported by the trust, have undertaken considerable work to improve attendance. Whole-school attendance is improving and is now above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has also reduced and continues to do so. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving but remains below national averages.
- Following raised expectations of behaviour, the number of pupils who were excluded from school in recent years has been high. However, continued strong pastoral support has supported pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively and the proportion of pupils who are excluded from school has reduced, although it remains above the national average.
- Pupils, staff and parents recognise that behaviour has improved considerably. Further improvement, rightly, remains a priority.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Poor teaching has led to pupils consistently making slower progress than other pupils nationally in recent years. In 2016, pupils' overall progress was significantly below the national average. In English and mathematics, pupils' progress was also considerably below that of other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not make sufficient progress in a range of subjects. Until recently, leaders had not ensured that additional funding to support these pupils had been used effectively. This funding is beginning to support pupils to make greater progress.
- In 2016, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who did not have an education, health and care plan made considerably less progress than expected in a range of subjects.
- Following a review of the curriculum, leaders took the decision to focus, initially, on improving pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics. In these subjects, pupils' progress has steadily improved, although it remains below national averages.
- The work in current pupils' books in English and mathematics shows indications of improved progress, particularly for the most able pupils. This is as a result of improved leadership, raised expectations and stronger teaching in these areas than has been the case in recent years.
- A significant number of pupils enter the school with reading and numeracy levels below those typical for their age. Leaders have ensured that funding to help these pupils to catch up is used effectively. Therefore, the majority of pupils make good progress in these areas in Year 7.
- Pupil' progress in science is consistently stronger than in other subjects. In 2016, pupils' progress was higher than that made by all pupils nationally.
- Leaders promote achievement in a range of creative subjects, for example performing arts and music. Pupils make good progress in these areas.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of education provided in the sixth form and are not strategic in their approach to securing improvements. They have not evaluated the impact of their work robustly enough to enable necessary improvements to be made.
- Too many students begin courses that are inappropriate to their needs and abilities. A significant proportion of students do not complete the courses they begin in Year 12.
- A high proportion of students do not undertake appropriate work-related learning. Many students do not participate in work experience. Leaders have been too slow to improve this aspect of the school's provision.
- Leaders do not ensure that disadvantaged students are effectively supported. Their rates of progress are slower than for other students and are not improving quickly enough.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Students report that their progress has been limited by poor resources and non-specialist teachers in the past.
- Where teaching is stronger, for example in mathematics, students make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan appropriate activities.
- Students' progress overall in academic subjects is improving and, in 2016, was similar to the national average. Students' progress in vocational subjects was slightly below the national average.
- Leaders are aspirational for students' future success and progression. The school provides good support and advice for students regarding their next steps. Students are positive about their futures and the proportion of students who progress to higher education, employment or training is above the national average.
- A very high proportion of students who begin courses in Year 13 complete their studies.
- Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it best meets the needs of learners. The small number of vocational courses currently on offer will be reduced next year.
- Although very few students need to resit GCSE English and mathematics, the proportion making sufficient progress in level 2 qualifications in these subjects is high.
- Pastoral support for students in the sixth form is generally strong. Students are aware of how to stay safe in a variety of situations. However, their understanding of the potential risks of extremism is limited. Leaders are aware of the need to further improve this aspect of students' development.
- The conduct of students is good and attendance is high. They are confident and self-assured. Students are well supported to develop social responsibility and engage in a variety of enriching activities. For example, Year 13 students participate in environmental projects in the local community.

School details

Unique reference number	135967
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031159

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,092
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Barton
Principal	Paul Davies
Telephone number	01536 532 700
Website	www.ketteringscienceacademy.org
Email address	jtomkins@ketteringscienceacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school changed its status in September 2016 from an all-through academy to a secondary-only provision. Therefore the numbers on roll reduced significantly. The school is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of the Brooke Weston Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from white British backgrounds is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below

the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly lower than average.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision at Torch Academy and Keystone Youth Works.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 54 lessons, some jointly with senior and middle leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, other staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the trust. An inspector spoke by telephone with a member of staff from an off-site alternative provider.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a sample of pupils' books, including an additional sample selected by school leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, before and after school and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning and behaviour in an assembly and during registration.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and spoke with pupils in discussion groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered the 66 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 57 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also considered additional communications from parents.
- Inspectors considered the 67 responses from staff to Ofsted's survey.

Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Kathryn Hardy	Ofsted Inspector
Ellenor Beighton	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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